

Opening the Eyes of My Heart

It is exciting to kick off our new Vision Plan 2024 teaching curriculum. We worked on it from July-November. It's one of the most satisfying things we do. It's a pleasure to work together with our eldership on this. It's all for you. Don't you just love the book of Ephesians? It is an absolutely amazing epistle .. so rich and so profound as it expresses what God has done for us in Christ. Developing a deep knowledge and appreciation for our status helps us understand the why behind the way we are called to live (Ephesians 4-6).

I. Ephesians 1.3-14: Six Spiritual Blessings

- A. Ephesians 1.4a: You have been **chosen**: *For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world,*
- B. Ephesians 1.5a: You have been **predestined**: *He predestined us ... ,*
- C. Ephesians 1.5b: You have been **adopted**. *...to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself...*
- D. Ephesians 1.7: You have been **redeemed**. *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,*
- E. Ephesians 1.8-9a: You have received **revelation**. *...he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. He made known to us the mystery of his will,*
- F. Ephesians 1.11: You have received an **inheritance**. *In him we have also received an inheritance,*
 1. Ephesians 1.13: We have already received it in part. *In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit... This is your **status**. You are owned by God.*
 2. Ephesians 1:14: *The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, ... This is your **experience**, His presence in your life is the assurance you are owned by God.*

II. Ephesians 1.15-18a: Paul's Prayer

- A. Ephesians 1.16: The basis: *I never stop giving **thanks** for you as I remember you in my prayers.*
- B. Ephesians 1.15: The reason: *...your **faith** in the Lord Jesus and your **love** for all the saints.*
- C. Ephesians 1.17: What Paul prays for:
 1. That they receive the **Spirit** of wisdom and revelation...
 - a) That God will help them better understand their status. i.e., *who they are in Christ.*
 - b) He does this non-miraculously by giving you the ability to study the Word, James 1.5.
 2. That they better know God: *... in the knowledge of **him**.*
 - a) Philippians 3.10: *My goal is to **know** him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death,*
 - b) You have been given the Spirit as a resource for living the Christian life.
- D. Ephesians 1.18a: The Spirit's goal: *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened** ...*
 1. Paul is praying that the Spirit will help us understand the Word in more profound ways.
 - a) See Colossians 3.16a: *Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom...*
 - b) The Spirit helps us make it burn in our minds. See Luke 24.31-32.

III. As We Close...

- A. There is a tension within the Scriptures that we must appreciate:
 1. Scripture calls for maturity.
 2. Maturity understands growth is uncomfortable. *It takes you somewhere where you've never been before.*
 3. Maturity understands growth involves changing perspectives.
- B. An inability to understand this tension and respond to it appropriately often leads to two extremes.
 1. Resist change at all costs.
 2. Abandon God's teaching.
- C. This year at Cornerstone we'll be challenging ourselves. Our intention is to go deeper. Our direction is "biblical." Our aim is Jesus. Will you be an active participant in the Spirit's work of transformation?